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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN E. SUNUNU, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Father John Ryan, St. Brendan Catholic Church, Ormond Beach, FL.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Gracious and Creating God, before time began, You loved us. Before we were born, You knew us. You imagined us, then created us in Your holy image. From the beginning of time we were Your people, and through time You have been our Loving Father.

Blessed are You, Lord, Father of the universe and blessed is Your holy Name. Bless the work we do this day and the work yet to be done in these Chambers.

Gracious Father, without You nothing is worthwhile, nothing is of value. Grant to us and to our endeavors Your gracious and holy blessing. Keep us one Nation under Your loving gaze. Make us mindful of those who find life difficult and move us to be their voice, their advocates. May we always labor toward liberty and justice, dignity and goodness.

Blessed be God. Blessed be the nation whose God is the Lord both now and forever. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JOHN E. SUNUNU led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication

to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE.
Washington, DC, March 9, 2006.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN E. SUNUNU, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SUNUNU thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maine is recognized.

SCHEDULE

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will be in a period of morning business. I ask unanimous consent that the period be extended until 12 noon with the time equally divided in the usual form.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the majority leader be recognized at the conclusion of morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, last night the majority leader filed cloture on the lobbying reform bill. Under the rule, that vote would occur on Friday although it is hoped that the vote could be expedited and occur sometime today.

As a reminder, the majority leader has announced that it is also possible—

and indeed we hope—to consider the lobbying reform-related amendments throughout the day today if an agreement can be reached.

Also, Senators should be aware that all first-degree amendments to the lobbying reform bill must be filed at the desk by 1 o'clock today as provided for under rule XXII.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

LOBBYING REFORM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, prior to the distinguished Senator from Maine leaving the floor, I want to express my appreciation to her, Senator LIEBERMAN, Senator DODD, and Senator LOTT for their work on lobbying reform. We are going to complete this legislation; it is just a question of when we complete the legislation. It is something we need to do, and the American people want us to do it. Even though I am sure everyone's patience was tested yesterday—I have managed bills and I know how difficult it is when you can see the light at the end of the tunnel and somebody throws up a light and you can no longer see the end—we will complete the legislation. I am hopeful and I am confident we can do it on a bipartisan basis.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I thank the Democratic leader for his comments. This is an important piece of legislation. It has been completely bipartisan. The legislation reported by the Homeland Security Committee was reported with only one dissenting vote. The bill that was reported by the Rules and Administration Committee was reported unanimously. We have worked very closely with our ranking members, and I appreciate the assurances of the Democratic leader that his side of

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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